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## THE ENRICHMENT OF THE HIGH-SCHOOL LATIN COURSE<sup>1</sup>

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BY MYRA H. HANSON  
Scott High School, Toledo, Ohio

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My paper will necessarily be of a very personal nature as I am to tell of the actual course of study as it has been developed at Scott High School, Toledo, Ohio, during the past two years. Within the last decade I have visited many Latin classes—in Boston, New York, Richmond, Baltimore, Washington, Buffalo, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and other cities—and have found everywhere the stereotyped work in translation: a year of Caesar, a year of Cicero, a year of Virgil; syntax and translation, translation and syntax, almost without variation; occasionally a little reading of the Latin, almost never sight reading, sometimes a derivative. Now and then the vivacity and energy of the teacher have made the recitation interesting, but often it has seemed to me unutterably dull. I have wondered how students are persuaded to elect a four years' course in mere translation when translations may be had so cheaply and read so easily. In spite of Miss Sabin's success in showing the relation between Latin and practical life, Mr. Perkins' success with English derivatives, and Dr. Gray's work along both lines, many Latin classes are taught very much as they were twenty years ago. I believe that we are missing a great opportunity to make the Latin course the most varied, the most useful, the most interesting course in high school.

Without further introduction or apology I wish to tell in detail exactly what our students have done in the last two years. I will outline, first, the Latin text covered in prepared and sight reading; secondly, the systematic word-study; thirdly, the weekly lesson in supplementary reading; and lastly, the programs.

<sup>1</sup> Read at the thirteenth annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South.

The Freshmen for the first time this spring are reading the "Story of Ulysses" from *Fabulae Faciles* twice a week during the last two months of the year; this means that the beginners' book (D'Ooge) will be used at least two days per week in the first part of the Sophomore year. This prolonging of the period of infancy is advocated by many teachers and will be recommended by the New York Board of Regents in its syllabus next September. For sight reading the first year we use the *New Gradatim*.

In the Sophomore year *Second Year Latin*<sup>1</sup> is our textbook, with its delightful collection of fables, bits of Roman history, the story of Cyrus the Great, several of Pliny's letters, a few simple bits of poetry from Horace, Catullus, and Ovid, and several Lives from *Viri Romae* and Nepos. The main difficulty here is the vocabulary, and we meet this by printed vocabulary cards, which are hung up in advance and left up for a week, so that daily oral drill can be given on the words of the advance lessons as well as daily review in preparation for a written vocabulary test once a week. We read Caesar only the latter half of the second year and find the selections given in *Second Year Latin*, ranging from Books I to VII, full of human interest with comparatively few of the horrendous passages of indirect discourse that have been the Waterloo of so many students. The lessons are almost a page in length from the start—sufficient material to make the student feel that he is really reading history. We cover as much ground in one semester as we used to do in two and have reduced the number of failures to zero. We use Caesar for sight reading also, and I believe that I do not exaggerate when I say that we read him with breathless interest.

In Junior Latin we begin with the *Manilian Law*, following this with the third Catilinarian oration. I have long felt an aversion to spending half the year on the Catilinarian conspiracy, acquiring all the words for crime and profligacy that the Latin language boasts. I consider it our greatest achievement to have departed from the stereotyped third-year course. During this semester our sight reading is from Sallust.

The second semester, after *Pro Marcello*, we read about 1,500 verses of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, ending the year with *Pro Archia*,

<sup>1</sup> *Second Year Latin*. Ginn & Co.

much too technical for high-school students, but *sic volvere Parcas*. Our sight reading during this semester is from Cicero's letters, *Pro Roscio, In Verrem*, as given in Barss, *Third Year Latin—For Sight Reading*.<sup>1</sup> I confess that I appreciate somewhat the feelings of the classically trained Englishman quoted in a recent number of the *Classical Weekly* to the effect that in his eight years of Latin he had managed to "escape that arch-bore Cicero." With due regard for the army of teachers who consider Cicero's orations the cream of the Latin course, I submit the suggestion that they are too remote from the modern high-school student's interest to be easily vitalized.

The Senior year is sacred to Virgil, of course, but, with twelve books from which to choose, the course may maintain its interest without difficulty. We usually substitute Dr. Miller's suggested readings from Books VII–XII for the fifth *Aeneid*. Our sight reading is more Virgil, some Ovid, and selections from *De senectute* as given in Barss.

I need say no more of the weekly prose lesson than that we use Barss's *Writing Latin—Book I* through the second year and thus acquire our Caesar vocabulary before we need it; we use Bradley's Arnold<sup>2</sup> in the two remaining years, a book in which the sentences are somewhat difficult, but easier ones may well be substituted at the discretion of the teacher and thus varied from year to year; the unusual excellence of the rest of the material is more than compensation for all difficulties.

My next topic is word-study—definite, systematic word-study three days per week during the four years. In vocabulary notebooks which are examined by the teacher once a week the Freshmen keep complete lists of derivatives from one hundred Latin verbs, taking them as they appear in the Freshman special vocabularies. The most helpful book for the teacher in this connection is Bailey's *Etymology*.<sup>3</sup>

The Sophomores master eighty groups of Latin cognates as given in *Second Year Latin*, and thus learn early to distinguish at a glance between the compounds of *cado*, *caedo*, and *cedo*. Juniors

<sup>1</sup> Barss, *Third Year Latin—For Sight Reading*. American Book Co.

<sup>2</sup> Bradley, Arnold, *Latin Prose Composition*. Macmillan.

<sup>3</sup> Bailey, *Etymology*. American Book Co.

study prefixes the first semester and synonyms the second, using for the latter the lists given in D'Ooge's *Cicero*. The Seniors study suffixes and word analysis, using Jenks's *Latin Word Formation*.<sup>1</sup> In every class we talk over the vocabulary of the next reading-lesson, giving English derivatives wherever possible. Experience confirms my belief that vocabulary is the royal road to Latin. The same method with respect to new words is employed in sight reading, to which we devote regularly ten minutes a day. The teacher reads the Latin of a phrase or clause before the student translates it rather than of an entire sentence. Sight reading loses its terrors when attacked in small quantities, and the student is thus trained to phrase correctly and to master the thought in the Latin order.

Our weekly lesson in what I call supplementary reading consists in the Freshman year of mythology.<sup>2</sup> We have outlined the year's work as follows: the twelve great gods and the muses for the first semester; the greater heroes, the monsters, the Seven against Thebes, and the Trojan War for the second. Roman History through the Julio-Claudian dynasty is our supplementary work in the second year, with the emphasis placed upon the great men of Rome, a subject appealing strongly to the Sophomore boy. We use Creighton's *Primer*.<sup>3</sup>

In the Junior year we study Roman antiquities, using Wilkins' *Primer*.<sup>4</sup> In studying the Roman house each student draws the plan of a model house or constructs one of cardboard or of wood. We have Pompeian slides to supplement this work. In studying the Forum each student draws a plan of the Forum in Cicero's time. We find *Roman Antiquities* with its closing chapter on "The Roman's Religion" our most interesting supplementary work. The last five weeks of the year the Juniors substitute Wilkins' *Literature Primer*<sup>5</sup> for the *Antiquities*, taking up "Early Literary Remains" as an introductory lesson, then Ennius, Cato, Plautus, and Terence.

<sup>1</sup> Jenks, *Latin Word Formation*. D. C. Heath & Co.

<sup>2</sup> Bulfinch, *Age of Fable*. (Everyman edition.)

<sup>3</sup> Creighton, *Roman History Primer*. American Book Co.

<sup>4</sup> Wilkins, *Roman Antiquities Primer*. American Book Co.

<sup>5</sup> Wilkins, *Roman Literature Primer*. Macmillan.

Ennius and Cato are thus subjects of study about the time they are referred to in *Pro Archia*.

This clears the field for the Golden Age in the Senior year. The first semester we study Cicero, Caesar, Sallust, Lucretius, and Catullus; the second semester, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Livy. This may sound rather ambitious, and there may be those who scoff at such superficiality, but our present students, at least, will not make the remark of one of my earlier students—that she did not know the Romans had a literature until she reached college! College professors frequently complain that our students do not elect Latin. These brief literature lessons give ample opportunity to call attention to the Latin courses offered to college Freshmen. I say many times a year, “Let no one who has enjoyed Virgil drop Latin until he has read Horace.” Perhaps the time spent on literature in high school needs no other justification than that it calls attention to college Latin. Then, too, the knowledge of Latin literature that is gained by the teacher in preparing to teach the subject may not come amiss.

My last reference is to the programs held instead of the regular recitation and suggested by the “auditorium hour” in the Gary day. I plan only one program for the Freshmen—for St. Valentine’s Day, when we tell the famous love stories from mythology and recite translations of Latin love lyrics. The Sophomores have two programs—the “Legends of the Seven Early Kings” forming one, the other being a Caesar program on the ides of March, for which there is such a wealth of interesting material. The Juniors likewise have two during the year—a Cicero program on January 3 and an Ovid program in the spring, with the Pyramus and Thisbe scenes from *Midsummer-Night’s Dream*.

The regular monthly programs are the exclusive privilege of the Senior class, whose members consider themselves a Latin society on such occasions, with a consul presiding. My aim has been to make them as far as possible supplementary to the weekly literature lesson, but often the occasion suggests the topic. On the ides of October a Virgil program with Virgil slides—or, as a delightful substitute this year, an illustrated lecture on Sicily by Professor Lord, of Oberlin College, to which all lovers of the classics in our city were

invited. In November our subject is "Roman Superstition," while in December we of course have a Saturnalian program. In January we combine very satisfactorily the Roman calendar and Catullus; in February we commemorate the Roman Parentalia by a most illuminating program on Roman burial customs, belief in immortality, inscriptions on tombs, ancient burial places, etc. A Roman banquet is held on the Liberalia in March in honor of the boy whose seventeenth birthday has just been passed, the first act from Schlicher's play *Tirones* (showing the assumption of the *toga virilis*) having been given earlier in the day. On April 21 we celebrate the founding of Rome. A Horace program and one on Roman humor complete the year.

This ends our enriched Latin course, which is not a theory, but has crystallized from actual doing. It led one Junior girl to say with evident sincerity, "I think Latin offers more than any other course in high school." I agree with her. Don't you?